
2. FRAMEWORK PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

City regulations and policies shape the content of the Framework Plan and establish basic requirements for its implementation. This Section first describes pre-existing City regulations and policies, and then establishes overall goals for Framework Plan implementation and measures necessary to implement them.

THE FUTURE URBANIZING DESIGNATION

The Future Urbanizing Area (FUA) designation was established in the City's 1979 General Plan and refined in subsequent City Council Policies. The 1979 plan classifies all land in the City as belonging in one of three tiers: urbanized, planned urbanizing, and future urbanizing. The tier designations reflect the City's desire to manage urban expansion and to allocate private and public resources efficiently. The designations and implementing council policies are intended not only to regulate the type and timing of development in urban expansion areas, but also to strengthen the older and geographically central parts of the City that comprise the urbanized area. The FUA designation is an interim designation designed to prevent premature urban development. The 1990 guidelines describe the City's objectives for future urbanizing areas as "to avoid premature urbanization, to conserve open space and natural environmental features, and to protect the fiscal resources of the City by precluding costly sprawl and/or leapfrog urban development."

In the 1990 Guidelines for Future Development, which amended the General Plan, the City established the basis for a fourth designation to be applied to selected areas of the City: the environmental tier. The addition of the environmental tier to the three designations previously established conveys the City's objective of long-term preservation of some lands in a natural state. The concept is implemented for the NCFUA in the Framework Plan. (**Section 5** provides background and principles for the environmental tier.)

2.1 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FUTURE URBANIZING DESIGNATION AND PHASE SHIFTS

The goal of the Future Urbanizing Area designation is to prevent premature urbanization of these areas until it has been determined that they are needed to accommodate the City's growth. The A-1 zone implements this designation and Council Policy 600-29, "Maintenance of Future Urbanizing as an Urban Reserve," lists four development alternatives for properties in the FUA. These are:

- Development pursuant to A-1 regulations. In most of the NCFUA, this could result in a maximum development intensity of one housing unit per ten acres. Other allowable uses are churches, private stables, commercial riding, training or boarding horse stables, and most agricultural uses;

- Development pursuant to the Rural Cluster Development regulations at the density permitted by the A-1 zone, which would result in the same maximum development intensity, but with development clustered to promote retention of open space and future development opportunities;
- Development pursuant to conditional use permit regulations “provided that the conditional uses as natural resource dependent, non-urban in character and scale, or are of an interim nature which would not result in an irrevocable commitment of the land precluding future uses,” or
- Development pursuant to the Planned Residential Development (PRD) regulations at a density not to exceed one dwelling unit per four acres.

The General Plan recognizes that the FUA designation is interim in nature and that land will be shifted from the future urbanizing to the planned urbanizing tier to accommodate the demand for growth. While this idea is a simple one, its interpretation and implementation are complex. To date, no criteria for defining “premature” have been established. Review of relevant City policies and documents reveals several key policy ideas:

Growth is to be accommodated and managed citywide, not limited (i.e., an ultimate or buildout population for the City is not envisioned). This idea, which is conveyed by Council Policy 600-30, suggests that the City’s land use policies should accommodate San Diego’s share of regional growth as projected by the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) or the State Department of Finance.

The release of future urbanizing area land for urbanization should be related to land use in the urbanized and planned urbanizing areas. The General Plan (Guidelines for Future Development) establishes that “Expenditures or plans for future urbanization of these (future urbanizing) areas should not be made until the need for urbanization of these lands has been evaluated based on the extent of utilization and redevelopment of existing urbanized and planned urbanizing areas.”

There is a need to have a “viable market.” This phrase, included in Council Policy 600-30, suggests that, at any given time, land should be available in excess of the minimum necessary to meet housing demand. This idea is echoed in the General Plan, which states that some future urbanizing area land “may need to be shifted to the planned urbanizing area in order to meet presently unanticipated demands to enable the land market to operate more freely.”

Council Policy 600-30 outlines a procedure in which the City or a private property owner can apply for a “threshold determination” which is a determination by the City Council of whether there is a reasonable basis to initiate a General Plan amendment to “phase shift” land from the future urbanizing to planned urbanizing area designation based on the following findings. Only one finding must be made in order to approve the threshold determination.

1. The amendment is needed to provide additional land for development, based on City monitoring of the amount, rate, character and location of growth and development or in order to maintain a viable market.
2. The amendment may be responsive to population and growth rates which demand increased land availability.
3. Due to the limited size of the area in question and the nature of the proposed development, the amendment may not contribute to, encourage or induce urban sprawl, leapfrog development or premature development of the land.
4. The amendment may provide the City with substantial and unique public benefit.

Following the threshold determination approval, a land use plan for the area and an environmental impact report would be prepared. Upon considering the recommendation of the Planning Commission, the City Council would approve or deny a General Plan amendment shifting the land from the future urbanizing to the planned urbanizing tier. If approved by the council, the amendment would then be brought to the voters in a citywide election for final action.

2.2 FRAMEWORK PLAN AND RELATION TO THE THRESHOLD DETERMINATION

Implementation of the Framework Plan achieves two of the above findings necessary to make the threshold determination. The Framework Plan's goal of defining the built environment with the environmental tier and concentrating development in specific areas reduces urban sprawl. The majority of the NCFUA is contiguous with existing urban areas and its development would not constitute leapfrog development since public services and infrastructure could be reasonably extended there. Finally, the implementation of a functional and interconnected open space system that complements the San Dieguito River Park and Peñasquitos Preserve can be seen as a substantial and unique benefit to the citizens of San Diego.

However, the question remains as to whether the land within the NCFUA is needed to accommodate the projected growth within the City. Estimates by SANDAG based on the adopted Series 7 growth forecast, indicate that the region may experience a shortfall of developable land for future growth by the year 2010. Additional data from the Series 8 forecast will provide more current and detailed information regarding the City's ability to accommodate its share of regional growth. (**Section 2.3 - 2.7** are implementation principles.)

2.3 GUIDING PRINCIPLES: IMPLEMENTATION

- 2.3a The Framework Plan shall be adopted as an amendment to the General Plan. All General Plan policies will apply in the NCFUA. Where Framework Plan policies are more detailed than policies in the General Plan, Framework Plan policies will govern.
- 2.3b Within the coastal zone, the Framework Plan requires certification by the California Coastal Commission in order to become effective.
- 2.3c Adoption of the Framework Plan itself does not constitute a phase shift to planned urbanizing area, nor does it guarantee voter approval of a phase shift.
- 2.3d Proposition A, an initiative approved by San Diego voters in 1985, amended the General Plan to require a majority vote at a citywide election prior to any change in the future urbanizing designation or provisions restricting development in the FUA.
- 2.3e Land use designations in the Framework Plan that permit greater intensities of land use than existing zoning require a phase shift and voter approval in order to become effective.
- 2.3f The City should strive to reduce the uncertainty for property owners and the public regarding the ultimate implementation of the Framework Plan.
- 2.3g The uncertainty about future land use intensity and location due to the requirements of Proposition A, makes it difficult to size, locate, and finance an urban level of facilities and services prior to a comprehensive phase shift to the Planned Urbanizing designation.
- 2.3h Existing zoning is not effective in producing desirable land use patterns which efficiently support public facilities and public services, and which avoid premature urbanization and sprawl. This was demonstrated by the fact that at the time of the Interim Zoning Ordinance, approximately two-thirds of the 12,000 acres of the NCFUA had active development applications in process based on the one dwelling unit per four-acre clustering option in the PRD ordinance and A-1 zone.
- 2.3i Piecemeal development in accordance with the underlying zoning does not assure reservation of sites needed for facilities to serve the local population.
- 2.3j The Framework Plan fulfills the threshold determination requirements in Council Policy 600-30 because it discourages sprawl, leapfrog development and promotes a regionally significant open space system.
- 2.3k The Framework Plan also satisfies the recommendation in Council Policies 600-29 and 600-30 that a land use plan be prepared prior to a phase shift being placed on the ballot. Further analysis by the council of proposed phase shifts should focus on consistency with the Framework Plan, other adopted General Plan policies and regional growth management policies.

2.4 IMPLEMENTING PRINCIPLES: PHASE SHIFTS

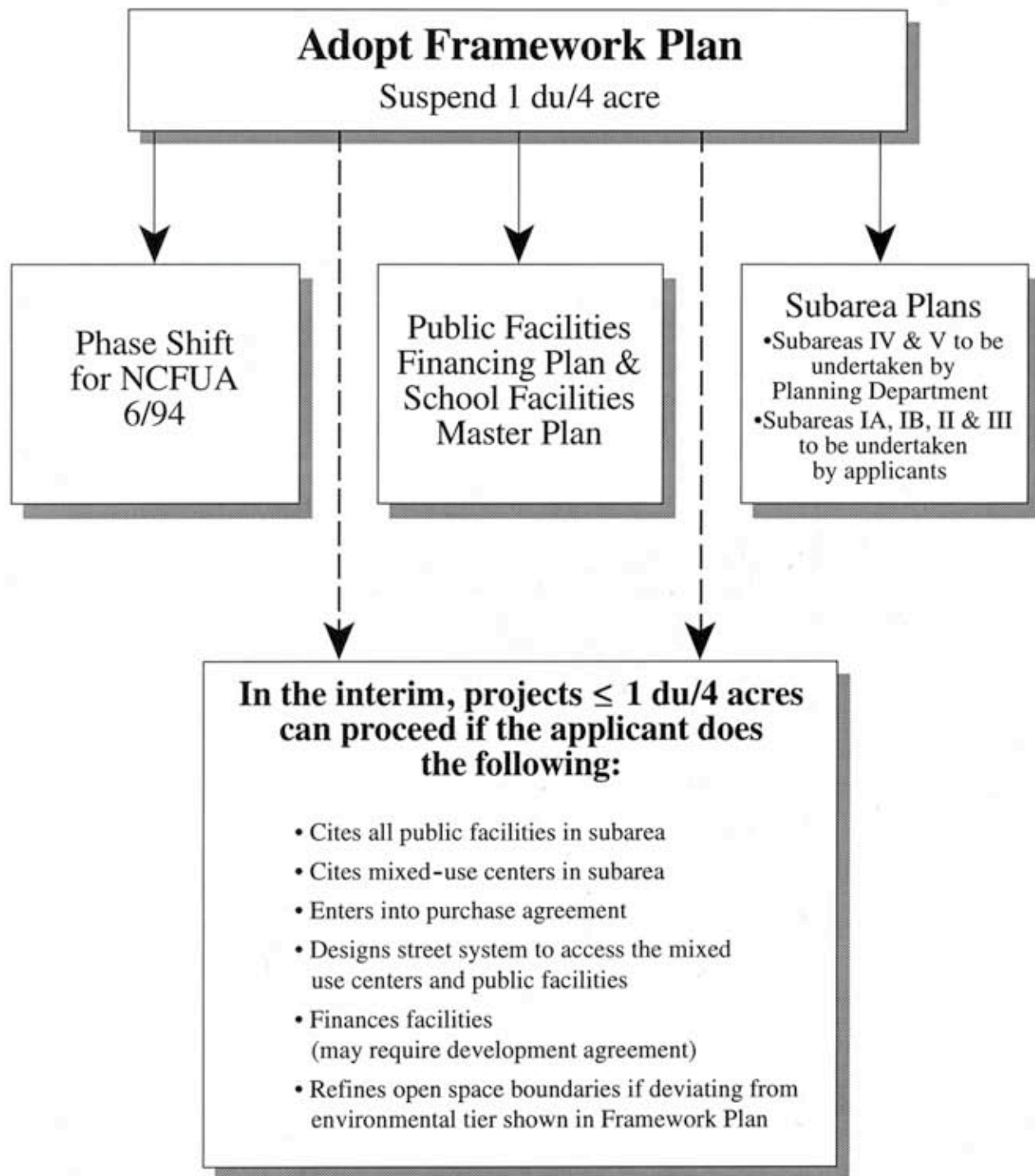
- 2.4a A phase shift shall occur for the entire North City Future Urbanizing Area to the Planned Urbanizing designation. The City Council shall consider this phase shift and, after considering appropriate ballot language, place it on the ballot for voter approval in the Statewide Primary Election in June 1994.
- 2.4b A phase shift of all the subareas delineated on the Framework Plan diagram (**Figure 3-3**) from Future Urbanizing to Planned Urbanizing may occur without subarea plans having been adopted for any subarea.
- 2.4c If the voters do not approve a phase shift for the entire NCFUA, phase shifts shall be presented to the voters by subarea after subarea plan approval as designed in the Framework Plan diagram.
- 2.4d Prior to a phase shift, development projects are subject to all Plan policies except the land use designations that provide for development at a greater intensity than that permitted by the underlying A-1 Zoning.

2.5 REQUIREMENTS FOR PREPARATION OF SUBAREA PLANS

- 2.5a A single, unified subarea plan is to be prepared and adopted for each of the subareas delineated on the Framework Plan diagram prior to development approval of density greater than one dwelling unit per ten acres except if consistent with the requirements in **Principle 2.5f** below (see **Figure 2-1**).

However, since the major property owner in Subarea II will be planning its property, approximately 250 acres, independently of the subarea planning process, the owners of the approximately 26-acre parcel at the southeast quadrant of Via de la Valle and El Camino Real may also prepare and submit a separate Subarea Plan-level document for their property instead of preparing a single, unified Subarea Plan for Subarea II. The separate plan shall meet the requirements for a Subarea Plan provided in **2.5b** below, to the extent that it is reasonable and appropriate for a parcel of this size which encompasses a small portion of Subarea II.

- 2.5b Subarea plans will be required to do the following, in conformance with the Plan:
 - Locate specific land uses to achieve the average intensities and land use patterns in the Framework Plan;
 - Finalize boundaries of the open space system;
 - Align roads shown in the Framework Plan;
 - Include a school facility financing plan as described in **Section 8**;



- Designate corridors for non-motorized transportation including bikeways and equestrian trails;
- Describe how development in the area will satisfy housing requirements as stated in **Section 7**; and,
- Locate public facilities and identify roads necessary to provide access to them.
- Include a facilities financing plan as may be required by the NCFUA Public Facilities Financing Plan and a fiscal analysis to analyze long-term operational costs to the City and the long-term revenue stream;
- Describe how the land uses and policies in the subarea plan and Framework Plan will be implemented;
- Provide a purchase agreement for public facilities sites as described in **8.2c**; and
- Conform to other City policies and ordinances including the Resource Protection Ordinance, Street Design Manual, Landscape Technical Manual, and Transportation System Management Program.

2.5c Subarea plans will be required to conform with Council Policy 600-40, requiring an analysis for conformance with the City's Resource Protection Ordinance (see **Appendix B, Resource Protection Element**).

2.5d Some regional programs may establish requirements applicable to NCFUA Subarea Plans. These include, but are not limited to:

- The Congestion Management Program for San Diego County, which, among other things, requires enhanced California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review for large projects, emphasizing analysis of project impacts on the regional transportation system.
- The Air Pollution Control District's Indirect Source Review Program. (Rules for this program are expected to be prepared by late 1992 for 1994 implementation); and,
- The Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP), which is a plan to preserve biodiversity in the central San Diego region.

2.5e Because of the large number of property owners and diversity of land use in Subareas IV and V, the City should take an active role in preparation of subarea plans for these areas. Upon adoption of the Framework Plan, the City should initiate preparation of subarea plans for Subareas IV and V. The cost of this planning effort shall be recouped by mutual agreement between the property owners and the City or by fees imposed at the time of development approval.

2.5f Development consistent with the underlying zoning (including the one dwelling unit per four acres clustering option provided by the PRD ordinance) at a density greater than one dwelling unit per ten acres may proceed prior to adoption of a subarea plan provided that the property owners do the following:

- Locate public facilities for the subarea and streets necessary to provide access to them as discussed in **Section 8**;
- Show relationship of these facilities to land use and open space designated in the Framework Plan consistent with the principles in **Section 8**;
- Show location of the mixed-use community core and/or local mixed-use center as designated in the Framework Plan and identifies major road access to these areas;
- Adjust open space boundaries if development plans substantially deviate from the environmental tier shown in the Framework Plan;
- Provide a purchase agreement for public facilities sites as described in **Policy 8.2c**; and,
- Finance public facilities as described in **Section 8**.

This is necessary to ensure sufficient sites for public facilities, and establish the location of mixed-use centers, open space corridors and a circulation network prior to development consistent with the underlying zones that may preclude future planning options. Development consistent with the underlying zoning at a density less than or equal to one dwelling unit per ten acres is not subject to this requirement.

2.5g Portions of Subareas II, III, and V are located within the coastal zone (see **Figure 2-2**) and are governed by the North City Local Coastal Program (LCP), adopted by the City Council in 1981 with amendments in 1985, 1987, 1988 and 1990 and certified by the California Coastal Commission. This document constitutes the land use plan segment for the North City area within the City's LCP. While the Framework Plan is intended to provide general guidance for the preparation of subarea plans, it is supplemented by the more specific policies in the North City LCP. These policies address filling and development within the 100-year floodplain, the treatment of sensitive and scenic slopes, and other issues, and shall be incorporated into a LCP segment of the subarea plans. Certification of the subarea plans by the California Coastal Commission is required in order for them to become effective in the coastal zone areas.

2.6 PHASING OF NCFUA PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- 2.6a Because of the importance of other planning efforts to the future of several NCFUA subareas, the following principles will govern timing of completion of subarea plans for individual subareas:
- Subarea IB: The Santa Fe Mesa Subarea Plan will not be approved prior to the adoption by San Diego County of a plan for the 4-S Ranch area that indicates land uses at a level of detail similar to or more precise than the level of detail in the Framework Plan, or 18 months following the adoption of the Framework Plan, whichever occurs first.
 - Subareas III and IV: The City will undertake an alignment study for State Route (SR-56). Subarea plans for these areas may be approved, provided sufficient corridors are designated for alternative alignments for SR-56. However, discretionary approval for development in these subareas shall not be approved prior to the adoption of the City's final alignment for SR-56.
 - Subarea V: The Shaw Ridge/Del Mar Mesa Subarea Plan will not be approved until the identification of a preliminary preserve system by the City's Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP).
- 2.6b Rezoning and other changes to the provisions restricting development necessary to implement the subarea plans is subject to the requirement for a phase shift and majority voter approval.
- 2.6c Following adoption of subarea plans and approval of needed phase shift(s), if all Framework Plan principles are addressed, timing of development may proceed based on market demand and developer ability to proceed.

2.7 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GENERAL PLAN, RELEVANT CITY COUNCIL POLICIES AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

- 2.7a The Framework Plan shall be adopted as an amendment to the General Plan. The General Plan circulation element shall be amended to show the road corridors in the Framework Plan and the environmental tier lands shall be designated open space.
- 2.7b Amend the PRD Ordinance, A-I Zone and Council Policy 600-29 to suspend the option for increased density up to one dwelling per four acres in the NCFUA prior to the adoption of a subarea plan or compliance with the provisions of **Principle 2.5f**.
- 2.7c Amend Council Policy 600-30 to exclude the North City Future Urbanizing Area from the Threshold Determination requirements. Also, the provision should be added that subarea plans shall be prepared consistent with the Framework Plan prior to phase shifts within the NCFUA.

- 2.7d Amend Council Policy 600-30 to state that the City will assume the cost of placing the phase shift application on the ballot in statewide primary or statewide general elections held in June and November, respectively, in even-numbered years. Also delete the option that the City will assume the cost of placing phase shift applications on the ballot for general municipal elections in odd-numbered years since these elections no longer include the entire City electorate.
- 2.7e The North City Local Coastal Program shall be amended to reflect the environmental tier boundaries as open space. This requires certification by the California Coastal Commission to become effective.